

# **Federal Communications Commission**

## **Proceeding 04-405**

### **Reply To Comments**

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I would like to express my concern regarding the proposal by BellSouth for the FCC to cease regulation of broadband service. I have been a customer of a smaller ISP, Sonic.net, for a number of years and I believe that the proposal would be damaging to such providers.

Whilst BellSouth does not operate in my service area, if the proposal was accepted, other large telephone companies would file similar petitions, directly affecting the service I receive. This is the case with petitions filed by Verizon Communications and Qwest Communications.

If the large telephone companies were not required to provide access for all ISP's I believe the smaller independent ISP's would see their costs rise, leading to them having to charge uncompetitive prices, and ultimately forcing them out of business.

However, rising costs is not my primary concern.

I am a computer professional, who works extensively from home and when I initially investigated providers for my broadband service, none of the larger telephone companies could provide the level of technical support that I required. Only the smaller ISP's had knowledgeable support staff available that could answer my technical questions. The larger telephone companies could only address basic "consumer level" issues and, in some cases, even answered those questions incorrectly, or would not provide support for the issue.

The large telephone companies basically cater to the mass market and find it not cost effective to provide in-depth support for the relatively small number of consumers for whom this is critical. If the smaller ISP's were forced out of business, people such as myself would not be able to obtain the service and support they need.

While most consumers will find the service provided by their telephone company to be adequate, and independent ISP's do not have a large market share, they do provide a service that would not be available, except at great cost, if BellSouth's petition was granted and the market was deregulated.

Sincerely,

Eric Wells.